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With Christ in the Heavenly Sanctuary

Norval F. Pease

Andrews University

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3:25, 26). God had been justified in His sayings and had overcome when He was judged (Rom. 3:4).

This was the climax in the controversy between good and evil. This was God's great moment of victory, victory over the forces of error and misinformation. And God will share His victory with all who choose to believe the truth and thus return to Him in faith and love.

For these reasons, and more besides, the only way to win back sinners and to silence Satan's charges was for God Himself to assume humanity, and to live and die as He did.

This is why some nineteen hundred years ago God clothed Himself in the body of a baby boy. As He grew to manhood and lived His matchless life, His one great purpose was to reveal the truth about God.

He wanted to show how infinitely loving the Father is, and so He loved everyone, including little children. The disciples assumed that the Saviour was too busy to have time for boys and girls. But Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them" (Matt. 19:14, R.S.V.).

He wanted to show how infinitely patient the Father is, so He treated everyone with utmost courtesy and understanding, even though He was so often rebuffed and insulted in return. One day the disciples asked if Jesus desired them to command fire from heaven to consume the rejecters of His love. They supposed that this would be pleasing to God. But God's Son replied, "The Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them" (Luke 9:56).

Jesus wanted to show how every detail of our lives is of concern to the Father. When He met people who were hungry, He fed them. When the sick came to Him, He healed them. One day He attended the funeral of Lazarus, one of His friends, and the Bible records that He cried.

Love's Supreme Demonstration

All of this led up to the *final*, supreme demonstration of what God is like.

On Thursday evening Jesus was arrested. He was illegally tried. He was falsely accused. He was grossly insulted. But not once did He become angry. For God is like that.

Twice He was horribly beaten. All night long He was allowed no sleep, no food. But did He become irritated? Not for a moment. For God is like that.

They made a game of slapping His wounded head. They jeered at His mysterious birth as illegitimate. One man even spat in His face. But did His patience run out? Did He become angry with His tormentors? Never! For God is like that.

Even as He hung on the cross, enduring the pain of crucifixion and the mocking of those He came to save—

even as He passed through the unspeakable agony of separation from His Father—He kept on praying, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

This is the kind of person our God is—all love and strength and dignity and compassion. And the Father is just as loving and forgiving as the Son. For Jesus said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9).

For six thousand years God has worked to win us back, to persuade us to love Him as He loves us. During all these years He has mercifully veiled us from the glory of His presence, that we might have time to know Him better.

Soon all will have decided. Then the glory of God will flash forth again throughout all creation. In that day the righteous will not be afraid. But the wicked will be slain by the brightness of His coming (2 Thess. 2:8).

"By a life of rebellion, Satan and all who unite with him place themselves so out of harmony with God that His very presence is to them a consuming fire. The glory of Him who is love will destroy

them." — *The Desire of Ages*, p. 764.

This brings us back to John 3:16.

"God so loved the world." He is not angry with us, even though we are sinners.

"That he gave his only begotten Son." And He has given Him forever as eternal proof of His love, a continuing reminder of what He was willing to do to restore man.

"That whosoever believeth in him." That is to say, all who have accepted the truth about God revealed in Christ and thus been won back to faith and love.

"Should not perish." That is, should not be consumed by the glory of His presence.

"But have everlasting life." In spite of our rebellion and all that we have cost Him, God wants us to live with Him—forever.

Could we ask to be treated more generously? And all God asks of us is that we love Him in return, and love Him enough to be willing to do things His way and so be made fit to live in His presence.

It may not be long now. Are you ready to live in His glory? Are you ready for Jesus to come?

(Reading, Tuesday, November 9, 1965)

With Christ in the Heavenly Sanctuary

By NORVAL F. PEASE

THE everlasting gospel is exceedingly broad. It includes the pre-existence of Jesus, who was with the Father "before the world was" (John 17:5). It includes the Incarnation—that fathomless mystery in which "the Word was made flesh" (John 1:14). It includes the life of Jesus—His teachings, His miracles—His love as revealed in His words and acts. It includes the cross on which the price was paid for man's redemption. It includes the empty tomb, for Jesus was declared to be the Son of God with power "by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4). It includes Jesus' ascension to heaven and His second coming, which was promised so clearly at His ascension (Acts 1:11).

The everlasting gospel includes one more area, very important to you and me. *This gospel includes the ministry of Jesus in heaven from the time of His ascension to the time when He will come again.* This is the gospel in the present tense. Jesus becomes more than a his-

torical character. He becomes more than the Christians' hope for eternity. "He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25). This is a glorious truth, filled with meaning and comfort for every believer.

Do we feel weak and needy? Are we tempted and tried? Have we hopelessly tangled the threads of life? Do we stagger under a burden of guilt? The Hebrew Christians of New Testament times apparently had these experiences too. Accustomed as they were to a priesthood, Jesus was represented to them as a high priest, and it was said regarding Him:

"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may

obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:14-16).

Their Christ was more than a historical character who had walked across the world's stage; He was more than a longed-for Messiah to come; He was a *present, contemporary* priest and king. They could come to Him "boldly," they could "obtain mercy," they could "find grace" any time, under any circumstances. He was a living Christ, hidden from their eyes for a season, but visible to their understanding.

Acceptance With God

The availability of Jesus has not changed one whit from that day to this. From the heavenly sanctuary Jesus is shedding upon His disciples the benefits of His atonement (*Early Writings*, p. 260). And because of these benefits, we may have the assurance of acceptance with God, of sins forgiven, and of eventual immortality. "The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross. By His death He began that work which after His resurrection He ascended to complete in heaven."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 489.

In practical life this means that, in a time of temptation, we can call upon our Saviour for strength, and He will respond immediately to our appeal, if it is made in faith. It means that the sorrows and disappointments of life need not crush us, for a living Christ is always ready to enable us to meet life's problems. It means that failure need not defeat us, for there is forgiveness awaiting our sincere request for it. It means that we need not stagger through life without direction, for a divine hand is reached out to lead us.

"He is in His holy place, not in a state of solitude and grandeur, but surrounded by ten thousand times ten thousand of heavenly beings who wait to do their Master's bidding. And He bids them go and work for the weakest saint who puts his trust in God. High and low, rich and poor, have the same help provided."—*The SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, on Heb. 9:24, p. 933.

His mission as the divine mediator is the salvation of man. He earned the right to be man's mediator by dying and rising again. After ascending to heaven He said to the church through John, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore" (Rev. 1:18). These are His credentials as man's Redeemer.

"The completeness of His humanity, the perfection of His divinity, form for us a strong ground upon which we may be brought into reconciliation with God. It was when we were yet sinners that Christ died for us. We have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness

of sins. His nail-pierced hands are out-reached toward heaven and earth. With one hand He lays hold of sinners upon earth, and with the other He grasps the throne of the Infinite, and thus He makes reconciliation for us. Christ is today standing as our Advocate before the Father. He is the one Mediator between God and man. Bearing the marks of His crucifixion, He pleads the causes of our souls."—Ellen G. White letter 35, 1894.

The living Christ is even more than an advocate for us when we are in trouble. In Him is strength for spiritual growth, in order that human weaknesses may be overcome. "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling . . ." (Jude 24); and "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13).

"Faith in the atonement and intercession of Christ will keep us steadfast and immovable amid the temptations that press upon us in the church militant."—Ellen G. White in *Review and Herald*, June 9, 1896.

But this keeping power of Christ does not fail to make provision for human weakness. "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1).

"Jesus loves His children, even if they err. They belong to Jesus, and we are to treat them as the purchase of the blood of Jesus Christ. . . . He keeps His eye upon them, and when they do their best, calling upon God for His help, be assured the service will be accepted although imperfect. Jesus is perfect. Christ's righteousness is imputed unto them, and He will say, Take away the filthy garments from him and clothe him with change of raiment. Jesus makes up for our unavoidable deficiencies."—Ellen G. White, quoted in N. F. Pease, *By Faith Alone*, p. 241.

All of these wonderful assurances and promises are in the present tense. They are the result of the love, the ministry, the mediation of the living Christ—*now*. Loving as He does the men and women for whom He paid such a great price, He works constantly in their behalf. The only limitation on what He can do for them is their lack of faith. His hand of grace reaches down constantly and imploringly, but only as man reaches up by faith and takes hold of His hand, can man be lifted from the paralyzing atmosphere of this world.

Would that this great truth of the mediation of Christ in our behalf might make the impact it should on our souls! He has everything we need—love, forgiveness, power to overcome, peace, joy, faith, insight. All of these blessings He is eager to bestow upon us; but His liberality toward us is limited by our lack of commitment to Him. This relationship with the living Christ is on a day-by-day

basis. Constantly He knocks. Whenever we open the door, He enters to bless. He reveals infinite patience with our waywardness, and unlimited sympathy with our weakness. His great passion is to restore, to save. His attitude is that of the loving parent, greatly magnified, purified, and enriched.

But there is another side to Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. He presides there, not only as mediator but as a judge. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (John 5:22).

"He fulfilled one phase of His priesthood by dying on the cross for the fallen race. He is now fulfilling another phase by pleading before the Father the case of the repenting, believing sinner, presenting to God the offerings of His people. Having taken human nature and in this nature having overcome the temptations of the enemy, and having divine perfection, to Him has been committed the judgment of the world. The case of each one will be brought in review before Him. He will pronounce judgment, rendering to every man according to his works."—*The SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, on Heb. 4:14-16, p. 929.

A Right Understanding of 1844

This judgment, the final phase of which began in 1844, has often been misunderstood. We must not picture our Lord as involved in a process of celestial bookkeeping, deciding man's salvation on the basis of the debits and credits found on his account. What is the real meaning of our message when we proclaim the warning, "The hour of God's judgment is come" (Rev. 14:7)? What is the reason for the judgment, and what are the criteria by which man is judged? The answer is suggested in the following quotation:

"All who have truly repented of sin, and by faith claimed the blood of Christ as their atoning sacrifice, have had pardon entered against their names in the books of heaven; as they have become partakers of the righteousness of Christ, and their characters are found to be in harmony with the law of God, their sins will be blotted out, and they themselves will be accounted worthy of eternal life."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 483.

The entire idea of this judgment—sometimes called the investigative judgment—rests on the premise that man is saved by God's grace through faith. Salvation is not secured by divine decree, neither is it the result of man's works. Figuratively, God is described as "investigating" to determine whether each man is saved or lost. He seeks to learn—humanly speaking—whether the individual has repented and "by faith claimed the blood of Christ as . . . [his] atoning sacrifice." Each person who meets these qualifications has been pardoned and has

received the righteousness of Christ, which has resulted in an acceptable character. This "investigative judgment" is but another way of describing the functioning of the gospel. It is a graphic way of picturing the absolute necessity of faith in Christ as the basis of salvation.

Christ's long period of heavenly ministry is drawing to a close. His mediation continues until the end, but concurrent with this mediation, beginning in 1844, there is judgment. Christ must certify—the word is used for want of a better one—that every saved person deserves to be saved because he has accepted the grace of God through faith. He must reveal to an interested, concerned universe the basis of His claim on the men and women whom He has redeemed. He must show that His grace has renewed those who have accepted it, and that His love has been reflected in their lives. He must vindicate His forgiveness of their sins on the basis of their willingness to forgive, a trait that is seldom found in unregenerate human nature. In a universe where millions are sinking into eternal darkness, He must justify His election to everlasting life of those who believe.

Security in Christ

If there is to be reward and punishment, there must be judgment; and the logical time for that judgment is immediately preceding the coming of Jesus. We who worship Him can feel secure in knowing that our judge is also our advocate. He who decides our destiny gave His life in our behalf. This being true, we may be sure that no one will be lost who can possibly be saved. No one can plead divine neglect or injustice. No one will be lost by an accident of fate beyond his control. *There is security in Christ.* "For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim. 1: 12).

The risen Christ, our Mediator and Judge, is just as real as He was when He appeared to Mary Magdalene at the tomb, or to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, or to Peter by the seashore. He is just as concerned about His believers as when He dried Mary's tears, dispelled the disciples' fears, dissolved Thomas' doubts, and forgave Peter's sins. Not limited by space or time, He is able to meet the needs of all mankind, everywhere.

John Bunyan, author of *Pilgrim's Progress*, relates the following experience:

"One day I was very sad, I think sadder than at any one time in my life, and this sadness was through fresh sight of the greatness and vileness of my sins. And as I was then looking for nothing but hell, and the everlasting damnation of my soul, suddenly, as I thought, I saw the Lord Jesus Christ look down from heaven

upon me and saying, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.'

"But I replied, 'Lord, I am a great, a very great sinner.' And He answered, 'My grace is sufficient for thee.' And now was my heart full of joy, mine eyes full of tears, and mine affections running over with love to the name, people, and ways of Jesus Christ."

This experience can come to anyone who sincerely seeks the Lord, for He is not far away. He is the *living* Christ. He knocks at the door of every life. To the young and vigorous He says, "Come, follow me," and to the old and weary He says, "I will give you rest." To the sinners He says, "Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more," and to the saint He says, "Come, ye blessed of my Father."

The ancient sanctuary was a place of beginning again. The sinner could receive pardon and hope for the future. The believer could receive assurance and insight. This sanctuary was a symbol of heaven, the place where God and Christ

and the angels dwell. We know very little about this center of the universe; but it has been revealed to us that there is One dwelling there who, two millenniums ago, took human nature that He might save mankind. His saving grace radiates from that distant place of power like a mighty electronic beam, directed to this needy world. This message from afar can be detected by those who possess faith and can transform their lives. And once the connection is made, messages travel both ways on that beam—our prayers flash heavenward, and His answers return to us.

This is a glorious arrangement, but it will soon give place to an even better one. The Mediator will soon come and redeem His own. He will take them with Him, that where He is there they may be also. Until that day arrives, let us be thankful that heaven and earth, though far apart, are not without communication; and that the love of Christ for His own is as great now as it ever was or ever will be.

(Reading, Wednesday, November 10, 1965)

"Unbending as the Lofty Cedar"

By ANEES A. HADDAD

THEY were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth" (Heb. 11:37, 38). These were men and women of God who "loved not their lives unto the death"; men and women who differed from the masses because they were willing to die for the principles in which they believed. Unless a person has something for which he is willing to die, he really has little for which to live. The greatest need of the world today is for men and women of such faith, vision, and stamina.

The times in which we live are so fraught with wickedness and sin that every child of God homeward bound needs to be unceasingly alert. Even the most godly saint in the church cannot afford to sleep on guard, for "none are so confirmed in right principles as to be secure from temptation" (*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 166). To a certain brother Sister

White wrote: "Your salvation depends on your acting from principle—serving God from principle, not from feeling, not from impulse" (*ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 698). At no time can the Christian abandon right principles and be safe. The faithful who are mentioned in Hebrews 11 had reached such maturity in their religious experience that they were willing to die rather than sacrifice principle. Unless the members of the church sincerely believe that "those who would rather die than perform a wrong act are the only ones who will be found faithful" (*ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 53), there is danger that they will hear the words, "Depart from me," instead of "Well done!"

Lofty Cedars

Daniel "sought to live in peace with all, while he was *unbending as the lofty cedar* wherever principle was involved." —*My Life Today*, p. 75. (Italics supplied.) This is a most fitting figure of speech for the Christian who stands for principle "though the heavens fall." In Psalm 104:16 the cedars of Lebanon are